

a direction where there would be some type of reduction in these benefits very soon.

I am very worried about this whole idea that there are a number of individuals out there right now who, I think, find themselves in a position where, you know, they are going to wait. They are just going to wait. They are going to wait for September to come, they are going to wait for October to come before they really start to reengage.

The other thing in Wisconsin and other States that exists, when you are on unemployment insurance, you had to go out and look for a job. You know, you had to talk to employers and you had to develop your soft skills, which means, you know, making sure you are ready for work and you get to work on time. I am a little concerned that the pandemic has had a direct effect on that as well.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to be here this morning to highlight these issues again. I would like to work with the other side of the aisle and I would like to work with the President to make sure that we can find a way of reversing what I think is a path that is really going to jeopardize our entire nationwide economy.

PREVENTING FUTURE PANDEMICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss what we must do to prevent the next pandemic and why it is not only a global health issue, but also an environmental one.

The origins of the pandemic we are battling now are clear: unsanitary, unsafe wildlife markets.

These markets, which are prevalent in some areas of Asia and Africa, but are present everywhere, including in the United States, are fed by trade in wildlife; some of it legal; some of it illegal; all of it very dangerous.

They are breeding grounds for a strain of viruses known as zoonotics, which are diseases born from the unnatural intermingling of the bodily fluids of different species in an unsafe and unsanitary market that sold wildlife, living and dead, for human consumption.

Other zoonotics include SARS, MERS, Zika, Ebola, swine flu, bird flu, HIV/AIDS, and now COVID. COVID-19 has truly opened the world's eyes to the danger of these markets and the global impact, and it should open our eyes to just how urgent the need for legislation around this is in order to prevent the loss of millions of lives.

That is why over the course of the last year I wrote the Preventing Future Pandemics Act along with my friend, Mr. FRED UPTON, and Senators CORY BOOKER and JOHN CORNYN in the Senate. We may not agree on much, but we agree on this: We have the power to prevent the next pandemic, and to do nothing would be an act of negligence.

A vital lesson that we need to learn from COVID is that we must fundamentally change the way that we interact with wildlife globally if we want to stop this from happening again. This means stopping deforestation and other habitat destruction, slowing and ending global climate change, and global shutdown of live wildlife markets.

Already we have seen how changes in temperature and weather patterns and encroaching human development have brought people and wildlife into more frequent and more intimate contact. Human consumption of wildlife is simply the most dangerous form of that contact.

To get at the root of this problem, the Preventing Future Pandemics Act would establish the official foreign policy of the U.S. to be that we would work with other countries to shut down these markets, end the trade in terrestrial wildlife for human consumption, and build international coalitions to reduce the demand for wildlife as food.

The bill would authorize funding for USAID to work on reducing demand for consumption of wildlife from wildlife markets, and support shifts to alternate sources of food and protein in communities that rely upon this consumption for food security.

Moreover, to truly lead by example, this bill would end the import and export of wildlife for human consumption in and out of the United States.

While wildlife is not a major source of protein in our country, these markets do exist here, and they still pose a danger. If we are to establish and maintain a position of international leadership on this issue, we must practice what we preach.

This bill will help us take significant steps to break down the silos between global health and conservation, because we know unequivocally that if we try to treat these as separate problems, we fail to solve either problem.

After the economic and social devastation of the past year, and the way that COVID-19 has upended all of our lives, it is my view that the Preventing Future Pandemics Act is a national security bill, a conservation bill, an animal wildlife bill, a small business bill, a travel industry bill, a manufacturing bill, a retail bill, a mental health bill, a housing bill, and a public transit bill. It is a bill to protect our lives and livelihoods from the threat of human consumption of wildlife and the associated wildlife trade.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to rally around this in order to potentially save the world from suffering the consequences of inaction and standing by hopelessly as we watch another pandemic ravage our world.

The next pandemic can be stopped, and the Preventing Future Pandemics Act is a vital first step. Let's do it together.

AFGHANISTAN WITHDRAWAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I agree with the comments of many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle expressing grave concern over the President's decision to establish a date certain for the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Afghanistan. I believe this decision is deeply misguided, and it is damaging to the long-term national security interests of the United States and our allies.

The strawman argument of ending forever wars might be a convenient campaign slogan, but it is strategically naive and deeply offensive to those who have volunteered to fight to ensure that the very organization which attacked us on September 11, 2001, is incapable of ever doing it again.

This is their job. It is a job that I did on four deployments. It is our sworn duty. It is their sworn duty. They are proud to do it, and we honor them for it.

The truth is our force levels in Afghanistan are a fraction of what they once were, and have been steadily decreasing for years. Maintaining a small residual force is not an unaffordable or unsustainable burden. More than any other deployment in the world, the U.S. and NATO presence in Afghanistan delivers tangible strategic benefits to the U.S. at a relatively small and ever-decreasing cost, not to mention the immense humanitarian benefit to the people of Afghanistan itself, especially the women and the girls.

The recent violence committed by the armed forces in Afghanistan only proves that the Taliban, al-Qaida, and ISIS-K clearly see this announcement as a full-fledged capitulation, and it reveals their true nature as untrustworthy and savage.

A military withdrawal must always be based on conditions, not a calendar. By establishing a specific date, we are simply surrendering the hard-fought leverage we have gained over two decades, and we are inviting the Taliban to embark on a vicious reign of terror against the Afghanistan people.

Furthermore, as a military man, I am utterly dismayed that we did not take the necessary steps to secure and prepare standoff basing in the region to project power when needed to conduct counterterrorism operations and to support the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces before announcing the withdrawal.

We put the cart before the horse. We now have a moral obligation to ensure that the Afghan security forces can continue functioning with the proper military and financial support to keep the Taliban from once again plunging Afghanistan into darkness.

Finally, and most urgently, we must honor our promises and keep faith with our partners and allies. Our values must remain the foundation of our foreign policy. If our partners and allies